



[4910-13-P]

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2015-3985; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-182-AD]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2010-04-03, for all Airbus Model A310 series airplanes. AD 2010-04-03 currently requires accomplishing repetitive detailed visual inspections for cracking around the fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels between the right side and left side of the front and rear spars, and repair if needed. Since we issued AD 2010-04-03, Airbus improved the ultrasonic inspection program to allow earlier crack detection and to extend the repetitive inspection intervals. We have determined these inspections are necessary to address the unsafe condition. This proposed AD would continue to require the repetitive detailed inspections for cracking around the fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels between the front and rear spars, and repair if needed, and would require supplemental repetitive ultrasonic inspections for cracking around the fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels and repair if needed. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct cracking around the

fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels between the right side and left side of the front and rear spars, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**DATES:** We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: 202-493-2251.
- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this proposed AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

## **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-3985; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Comments Invited**

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2015-3985; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-182-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will

also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

## **Discussion**

On January 28, 2010, we issued AD 2010-04-03, Amendment 39-16196 (75 FR 6852, February 12, 2010). AD 2010-04-03 requires actions intended to address an unsafe condition on all Airbus Model A310 series airplanes.

Since we issued AD 2010-04-03, Amendment 39-16196 (75 FR 6852, February 12, 2010), the manufacturer improved the ultrasonic inspection program to allow earlier crack detection and to extend the repetitive inspection intervals. We have determined these inspections are necessary to address the unsafe condition.

The European Aviation Safety Agency, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Community, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0200R1, dated September 19, 2014 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition on all Airbus Model A310 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

Following scheduled maintenance, cracks were found around the wing top skin panels fastener holes at Rib 2, between Stringer (STG) 2 and STG14.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could affect the structural integrity of the aeroplane. The General Visual Inspection required by the existing applicable Airworthiness Limitation Items (ALI) tasks may not be adequate to detect these cracks.

To address this issue, Airbus developed an inspection programme based on repetitive detailed inspections (DET) to ensure that any visible cracks in the wing top skin panels 1 and 2 along Rib 2 are detected in time and repaired

appropriately. EASA issued [EASA] AD 2008-0211 [<http://ad.easa.europa.eu/ad/2008-0211>] to require implementation of this inspection programme.

Since that [EASA] AD was issued, Airbus improved the inspection programme with an ultrasonic inspection to allow earlier crack detection, to subsequently reduce the scope of potential repair action, and to extend the intervals of the repetitive inspections.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD [<http://ad.easa.europa.eu/ad/2014-0200R1>] retains the requirements of EASA AD 2008-0211, which is superseded, and requires supplementary repetitive ultrasonic inspections [for cracking] of the wing top skin panel 1 and 2 between STG2 and STG10 at Rib 2 [and repair if needed].

\* \* \* \* \*

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at

<http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-3985.

#### **Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51**

Airbus has issued the following service information:

- Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, dated May 6, 2008,
- Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 01, dated August 5, 2010.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 02, dated March 5, 2014.

This service information describes procedures for detailed visual and ultrasonic inspections for cracking around the fastener holes of the wing top skin panels between the right side and left side of the front and rear spars at certain locations, and repair if needed.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have

access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section of this NPRM.

#### **FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD**

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

#### **Explanation of "RC" Procedures and Tests in Service Information**

The FAA worked in conjunction with industry, under the Airworthiness Directive Implementation Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), to enhance the AD system. One enhancement was a new process for annotating which procedures and tests in the service information are required for compliance with an AD. Differentiating these procedures and tests from other tasks in the service information is expected to improve an owner's/operator's understanding of crucial AD requirements and help provide consistent judgment in AD compliance. The procedures and tests identified as RC (required for compliance) in any service information have a direct effect on detecting, preventing, resolving, or eliminating an identified unsafe condition.

As specified in a NOTE under the Accomplishment Instructions of the specified service information, procedures and tests that are identified as RC in any service information must be done to comply with the proposed AD. However, procedures and

tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an alternative method of compliance (AMOC), provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in a serviceable condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC will require approval of an AMOC.

### **Costs of Compliance**

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 13 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it would take about 5 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Required parts would cost \$0 per product. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$5,525, or \$425 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this AD.

### **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

### **Regulatory Findings**

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.



## **The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2010-04-03, Amendment 39-16196 (75 FR 6852, February 12, 2010), and adding the following new AD:

**Airbus:** Docket No. FAA-2015-3985; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-182-AD.

#### **(a) Comments Due Date**

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

#### **(b) Affected ADs**

This AD replaces AD 2010-04-03, Amendment 39-16196 (75 FR 6852, February 12, 2010).

#### **(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to all Airbus Model A310-203, -204, -221, -222, -304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers.

#### **(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by cracking around the fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels between the right side and left side of the front and rear spars. This AD was also prompted by the development of an ultrasonic inspection program to allow for earlier crack detection and extend the repetitive inspection intervals. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking around the fastener holes in certain wing top skin panels between the right side and left side of the front and rear spars, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Repetitive Inspections**

Except as required by paragraph (i) of this AD: Within the initial compliance time and thereafter at repetitive intervals specified in paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(3) of this AD, as applicable, accomplish the actions specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) concurrently and in sequence, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 02, dated March 5, 2014, except as provided by paragraph (j) of this AD.

(1) Accomplish a detailed inspection for cracking around fastener holes in the wing top skin panels 1 and 2, along rib 2 between the front and rear spars on both the left-side and right-side of the fuselage.

(2) Accomplish an ultrasonic inspection for cracking around fastener holes in the wing top skin panels 1 and 2, along rib 2, between stringer 2 and stringer 10 on the left-side and right-side of the fuselage.

**(h) Compliance Times for Airplanes Not Previously Inspected**

(1) For Model A310-203, -204, -221, and -222 airplanes: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD at the later of the times specified in paragraph (h)(1)(i) or (h)(1)(ii) of this AD. Repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 flight cycles or 4,100 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 18,700 flight cycles or 37,400 flight hours since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.

(ii) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(2) For Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes having an average flight time (AFT) of less than 4 hours: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD at the later of the times specified in paragraph (h)(2)(i) or (h)(2)(ii) of this AD. Repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 flight cycles or 5,600 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 17,300 flight cycles or 48,400 flight hours since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.

(ii) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(3) For Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes having an AFT of equal to or more than 4 hours: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this

AD at the later of the times specified in paragraph (h)(3)(i) or (h)(3)(ii) of this AD.

Repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 1,500 flight cycles or 7,500 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 12,800 flight cycles or 64,300 flight hours since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.

(ii) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

**(i) Compliance Times of Airplanes Previously Inspected**

For airplanes previously inspected before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, dated May 6, 2008; or Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 01, dated August 5, 2010: At the applicable compliance times specified in paragraphs (i)(1) through (i)(3) of this AD, accomplish the actions specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) concurrently and in sequence, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 02, dated March 5, 2014. Repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD, thereafter at the repetitive intervals specified in paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(3) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For Model A310-203, -204, -221, and -222 airplanes: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD within 3,500 flight hours or 1,700 flight cycles, whichever occurs first since the most recent inspection.

(2) For Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes having an AFT of less than 4 hours: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD within

4,600 flight hours or 1,600 flight cycles, whichever occurs first since the most recent inspection.

(3) For Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes having an AFT of equal to or more than 4 hours: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD within 6,100 flight hours or 1,200 flight cycles, whichever occurs first since the most recent inspection.

**(j) Compliance Times if No Ultrasonic Equipment is Available**

If no ultrasonic equipment is available for the initial or second inspection required by paragraph (g) or (h) of this AD, accomplish the detailed inspection specified in paragraph (g)(1) of this AD, within the applicable compliance times specified in paragraphs (j)(1) and (j)(2) of this AD. After accomplishing the detailed inspection, do the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD at the applicable compliance times specified by paragraphs (i)(1) through (i)(3) of this AD. Subsequently, repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD thereafter at the applicable repetitive intervals specified in paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(3) of this AD.

(1) For airplanes not previously inspected before the effective date of this AD: Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD within the initial compliance time specified by paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(3) of this AD, as applicable.

(2) For airplanes previously inspected before the effective date of this AD using the service information identified in paragraph (j)(2)(i), (j)(2)(ii), or (j)(2)(iii) of this AD:

Do the actions required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD within the applicable compliance times specified in paragraphs (i)(1) through (i)(3) of this AD.

(i) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, dated May 6, 2008.

(ii) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 01, dated August 5, 2010.

(iii) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 02, dated March 5, 2014.

**(k) Repair of Cracking**

If any cracking is found during any inspection required by paragraphs (g), (h), (i), or (j) of this AD, before further flight, repair the cracking using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA).

**(l) Terminating Action for Certain Repetitive Inspections**

Accomplishment of a repair using the service information identified in paragraph (l)(1), (l)(2), or (l)(3) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the requirements of paragraph (g) of this AD, only for the repaired areas of the airplane.

(1) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, dated May 6, 2008.

(2) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 01, dated August 5, 2010.

(3) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 02, dated March 5, 2014.

**(m) Definition of Average Flight Time (AFT)**

For the purposes of this AD, the AFT should be established as specified in paragraphs (m)(1), (m)(2), and (m)(3) of this AD for the determination of the compliance times.

(1) The inspection threshold is defined as the total flight hours accumulated (counted from take-off to touch-down), divided by the total number of flight cycles accumulated at the effective date of this AD.

(2) The initial inspection interval is defined as the total flight hours accumulated divided by the total number of flight cycles accumulated at the time of the initial inspection threshold.

(3) The second inspection interval is defined as the total flight hours accumulated divided by the total number of flight cycles accumulated between the initial and second threshold.

**(n) Credit for Previous Actions**

This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, dated May 6, 2008; or Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57-2096, Revision 01, dated August 5, 2010.

**(o) Other FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

**(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):** The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, has the authority to approve

AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

**(2) Contacting the Manufacturer:** As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

**(3) Required for Compliance (RC):** If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the



procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in a serviceable condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

**(p) Related Information**

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0200R1, dated September 19, 2014, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-3985.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 28, 2015.

Michael Kaszycki,  
Acting Manager,  
Transport Airplane Directorate,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

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